

**News Release****Communications New Brunswick****N.B. Human Rights Commission****Human Rights Commission releases annual report (04/11/26)**

NB 1351

Nov. 26, 2004

FREDERICTON (CNB) - The following statement was issued by the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission concerning its 2003-04 annual report, which was released today, Friday, Nov. 26:

"In 2003-04, the Human Rights Commission focused on providing a better service by improving the human rights complaint process, setting clear educational priorities and enhancing its working relationship with other advocacy groups.

"In addition to its day to day work, the commission developed a new mission statement, a strategic plan, a communications plan and an education plan.

"The commission's vision is to be a leader in the promotion and protection of human rights and to contribute to a fair and equitable, productive and inclusive environment in which to learn, work and live.

"The education plan focuses on two priorities: to inform employers and employer organizations of their duty to accommodate people with disabilities; and to explain the business case for human rights.

"The commission also completed a two year comprehensive review of the *Human Rights Act*. It recommended the addition of four prohibited grounds of discrimination: social condition, political belief or activity, family status, and language. The existing grounds are religion, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, mental and physical disability, race, colour, national origin, place of origin and ancestry.

"Other recommendations were that the pension plan exception that allows mandatory retirement in some cases be repealed and that the *Human Rights Act*'s main exception be reworded and expanded for greater consistency.

"The commission also recommended that it be given a direct reporting relationship with the Legislature, with its budget set by a legislative committee. The members of the commission would continue to be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the legislative committee."

04/11/26

EDITORS NOTE: Printed copies of the 2003-04 annual report can be obtained by calling 1-888-471-2233. Electronic copies are available at: <http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/Annual-report-2003-04-New-Brunswick-Human-Rights-Commission.pdf>. **MEDIA CONTACT:** Alanna Palmer, Chair, New Brunswick Human Rights Commission, 1-888-471-2233. (Alanna Palmer replaced Dr. Patrick

Malcolmson as Chair in June 2004)

04/11/26

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